

## Chapter 1097

The ‘Hwasanization’ of the entire Central Plains (2)

“Ughhh...”

“Pl-please... spare us...”

“No... just kill me...”

Members of the Tangga and the Nokchae bandits were sprawled on the ground, writhing in agony. It’s unlikely one could witness a scene where the Tangga’s green-clad warriors and the Nokchae’s elite, dressed in similar grass-colored garments, all lay dying together.

Chung Myung sported a satisfied smile.

“This is the field of harmony in battle, indeed.”

Namgung Dowi simply closed his eyes without a word. Despite witnessing this sight several times, it remained a marvel — how was this even possible?

The Tangga is a well-respected family in Gangho. Naturally, their training is incredibly rigorous. The Nokchae is no different. Among the multitude of their green forest warriors, aren’t the ones present here some of the most selected elites? Even those unaware of Gangho’s circumstances would find it difficult to imagine how rigorously the Nokrim King must have trained them.

Those who underwent such rigorous training were quickly falling, barely surviving, and narrowly escaping death rolling on the ground amidst their fallen comrades. It happened within just a few hours under Chung Myung’s command.

Yet, despite his own experiences, Namgung Dowi, who appeared to reluctantly join them, gazed at those fallen humans with eyes bearing a sense of pity.

Even them, the Namgung Clan, had spewed unheard-of curses when they first encountered this situation.

But unlike Namgung Dowi, who was consumed by sorrow, there were others laughing at the pitiful sight.

“They’re all dead.”

“Ah. Aren’t some still not completely dead?”

“If they’re wheezing this much already, it’s not good.”

Those could rightly be called devil bastards.

Namgung Dowi narrowed his eyes while looking at Ogeom, who were shamelessly chuckling. Watching those devils of misfortune laughing as though others’ miseries were their happiness, it reminded him of... Huh? A monk? ...Why is the monk also laughing there?

Namgung Dowi abruptly halted his thoughts and tightly shut his eyes.

This is a corrupt place where both Tao and Buddhism are not distinguished.

The only consolation was that amidst this corrupted place, there was at least one individual embracing the true Tao.

Someone among the devils cautiously opened their mouth.

“S... Sasuk. Even though it’s tough after rigorous training, openly enjoying this situation seems a bit...”

Tears welled up in Namgung Dowi’s eyes.

‘Yoon Jong Dojang!’

Indeed, Hwasan’s vessel of Tao [도기(道器)]! Even in Hwasan that had become a gathering place for demons, there was hope.

Hearing Yoon Jong’s words, Baek Cheon opened his mouth with a mysterious expression on his face.

«Yoon Jong.»

«Yes, Sasuk.»

«Your words are certainly not wrong. I also think the same.»

«...Then why...»

«But try changing perspectives. Haven’t they been observing us train all this time?»

«...»

«Thinking about how much they must have enjoyed watching us, I can’t help but smile.»

«...»

«Try to remember. When we were training, how those people were observing us.»

«No, that’s...»

Yoon Jong, lost in thought for a moment, turned his gaze towards those scattered around him. Then, he murmured.

«Life... eventually reclaims what’s given.»

«Indeed. You’ve realized.»

It was the moment Hwasan’s Taoist vessel shattered.

‘Never come to realize such a thing!’, Namgung Dowi screamed inwardly, but Yoon Jong and Baek Cheon couldn’t fathom his thoughts.

«Looks like the Nokrim King has passed away?»

«Oh dear, he’s quite frail.»

«Will he really pass away?»

«Oh. He won’t die that easily. The training he’s been ordered to do seems like the worst, as if he’d truly die, but he doesn’t. It’d be better if he did just die, honestly.»

«Indeed. He has much more to endure.»

«Get well soon.»

Amidst the demons’ cackling, Im Sobyong lifted his head and glared at Ogeom. A chilling, venomous glare emanated from his bloodshot eyes.

«These, these creatures are worse than the Sapa...»

Cackle, cackle, cackle, cackle.

«Ehehehehehe!»

Namgung Dowi, watching the gruesome scene, finally averted his gaze.

‘Where is Cheonumaeng going?’

It was a feeling of having reached an irreversible point.

And then.

«No!»

With a dissatisfied expression Chung Myung briskly rose from his seat.

“What, did everyone just coughed up some blood and collapsed on the ground writhing after just a little bit of exertion?”

“...”

“...”

“Did you strut around, boasting about Nokrim and Tangga with this level of skill? With this endurance? Oh my, oh my. I’ve been believing in these things and fought in the frontline with them covering my back!”

As those who had been sending venomous glares to Ogeom immediately lowered their eyes upon Chung Myung’s sudden appearance.

Even if you just listed the people who thoughtlessly attacked that bastard out of anger and ended up covered in blood, you could easily cross the Yangtze River.

So, for now, it’s best to fake being dead and avoid eye contact.

“Tsk tsk tsk.”

Observing that sight, Chung Myung clicked his tongue with displeasure.

“With this level of skill I’ll have to face the Demonic Cult myself. It’ll be fortunate if these guys won’t wet themselves and run away without trying to fight.”

Those who had lifted their heads to voice their grievances due to a sense of injustice quickly bowed their heads deeply upon seeing Chung Myung’s face.

‘Close your eyes firmly.’

‘That person isn’t Hwasan Shinlyong we knew — he is Hwasan Geomhyeop.’

‘Now even the head of the family has to step back.’

Although their temperaments remained unchanged, the status of Hwasan Shinlyong they once knew and the present Hwasan Geomhyeop were as different as heaven and earth. Even without considering his status as a disciple of Hwasan and his friendship with the family head, if someone with equal skill offers advice, it’s best to just close your eyes and listen.

The perspective of the Nokrim’s members was self-evident. With the Nokrim King present himself, rolling in dirt, there was no need for further explanations.

Surveying everyone with a pitiful look, Chung Myung spoke,

«Starting tomorrow, expect twice the workload from today. Those who try to slip away like today without paying for their insolence might as well escape tonight. It’s more convenient for me than having their blood on my hands.»

«Um, excuse me.»

At that moment, the Young Lord Tang Pae, raised his hand with a troubled expression.  
«I-Is it permissible to escape? Or, would there be any retribution separately...?»  
«Why would I seek retribution against the Tangga or Nokrim? Obviously, I wouldn't.»  
«Tru-true...»

Tang Pae's face turned pale. Of course, following Chung Myung's subsequent words, it darkened even more, but that's beside the point.

«Instead, you'll have to bear the wrath of the Tangga's Lord yourself.»

«...»

Tang Pae, who pictured the image of Tang Gunak running towards him with an expressionless face, holding daggers in both hands, lowered his arms in resignation. In its way, that was its own version of hell. Or perhaps, in comparison to that situation, this place might even be considered heaven.

«In any case.»

Chung Myung clicked his tongue briefly, as if displeased.

'No wonder only Hwasan had suffered so much.'

Hwasan of the past eventually focused solely on enhancing its own power and efficiently utilizing it, neglecting any interest in supporting those who provided assistance from the rear. As a result, Chung Myung ran haphazardly, cutting down countless enemies from east to west, garnering heroic deeds from all the corners, but...

'Wait, in the retrospect, was I just risking my life for nothing?'

- Hahaha, you catch on quickly.

"This fellow?"

Chung Myung squinted, glancing up at the sky.

Lately, his admiration for Chung Mun had been gradually diminishing. Wasn't this guy the type who used to continuously shout, 'Chung Myung! The demonic bastards are here! You should go and deal with them!' day and night?

Even Hyun Jong, unable to stop Chung Myung from recklessly stepping in, would sweat profusely, warning about the consequences if he did.

"...Truly, there's nobody trustworthy in this world."

"Huh?"

"Ah, never mind!"

Chung Myung waved his hand dismissively and squinted his eyes.

"The Gupailbang bastards are solely pondering on ways to punish us somehow and Sapaeryeon is only contemplating on how to stab us in the stomach. And you lot, with such mediocre skills, think you could take on both of them at once?"

Im Sobyong raised his head abruptly.

"No, when did I ever say I'd face them both at once? What nonsense have I uttered..."

Thud!

In that moment, the shoe that flew hit Im Sobyong squarely in the face.

Thud.

Stiffening up, Im Sobyong toppled over, collapsing onto the ground.

“Show some manners when elders are speaking!”

Yoon Jong, observing the situation, whispered softly,

“Sasuk, isn’t he the youngest one here?”

“Just think of him as our ‘hyung’. It makes things easier for both of us.”

“...I suppose so.”

Observing Im Sobyong convulsing on the ground, Chung Myung clicked his tongue.

“Calling such a person the King of the Green Forest. Ugh.”

“...”

“Anyway, training resumes tomorrow. Come prepared, assuming you’ve all fallen behind from tomorrow onwards.”

“...”

“By any means necessary, I’ll make sure you become worthy. Even if it’s for my survival.”

With his eyes flashing determination, Chung Myung turned on his heel and walked away.

Baek Cheon, confirming that punk had gone far, shook his head in disbelief.

“He’s got some guts.”

“It seems like he’s serious about doing it right.”

“At this point, it’s actually a bit pitiful.”

Watching Chung Myung saunter away, holding a bottle of alcohol in one hand, Jo Geol muttered after a glance.

“But why is that guy suddenly acting this way?”

“Huh?”

“Well, I mean... Sure, it’s more comfortable and better for us to train in coordination with our allies...”

Upon hearing this, the members of Tangga and Nokrim widened their eyes and stared at Jo Geol.

Comfortable? This? Seriously?

“Considering that guy’s temperament, I thought the moment we catch our breath, he’d start making a fuss, claiming we did nothing in Hangzhou. But strangely, it seems like that arrow is pointing in a different direction.”

“What else could it be?”

Baek Cheon shrugged.

“Whether it’s Sapaeryeon or the Demonic Cult, now it’s becoming difficult to handle with just Hwasan, isn’t it?”

“That’s true.”

Honestly, even the disciples of Hwasan would have to admit it. No matter how much they try to overcome it with their skills, the numbers are just too different. No matter how strong Hwasan becomes, in terms of numbers, it’s just a small sect.

Even if every disciple of Hwasan possesses a one-to-hundred level of skill, the numbers in Demonic Cult or Sapaeryeon would surpass them by a hundredfold. Hence, it's a situation where there might not be a clear answer.

"So, to oppose those guys, the only way is to raise other factions, just like Hwasan did."

"...Like what?"

"Like Hwasan."

"..."

"Then what Chung Myung aims for ultimately is 'Hwasanization' of the whole Cheonumaeng. Furthermore, one might say it's the 'Hwasanization' of the entire Central Plains?"

"The 'Hwasanization' of the entire Central Plains?"

Everyone shivered with shock on their faces.

"Because that's the only way to oppose those demonic cultists and the Heavenly Demon, don't you think?"

"W-Well, that's true, but..."

"That sounds terrifying."

"That's akin to hell."

"No, at this point, isn't it a situation where we should compare which is more terrifying between the Central Plains extermination plan by the Demonic Cult and this?"

"Hey guys, you're disciples of Hwasan."

"We know, but..."

Jo Geol shook his head nervously.

"If it really comes to that, Jang Ilso would become truly scary."

"Not quite."

"Huh?"

Baek Cheon chuckled.

"Isn't there someone who would find that situation more terrifying than Jang Ilso?"

"Who... Oh!"

At that moment, everyone's gaze turned sharply, precisely aimed at the shiny bald head of one person.

The shiny head turned bright red in an instant.